

## WHAT'S ON



**Rabindra Utsab**  
Venue: Chhayanaat Bhaban,  
Dharmundi  
Date: May 8-9  
Time: 6:30pm



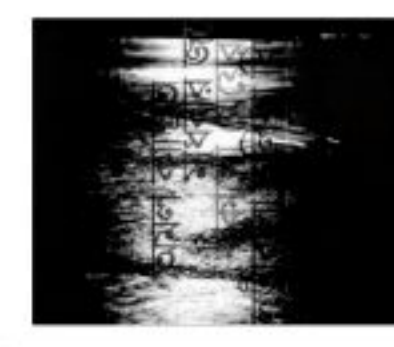
**Jatir Rabindra Sangeet Utsab**  
Organiser: Bangladesh Rabindra Sangeet Shilpa Sangha  
Venue: Central Public Library, Shahbagh  
Date: May 6-10; Time: 5pm



**Khelaghor's 62nd anniversary**  
Organiser: Khelaghor  
Venue: Music and Dance auditorium, Shilpakala Academy  
Date: May 9; Time: 5pm



**Munir Chowdhury Theatre Festival**  
Organiser: Shilpakala Academy  
Venue: Experimental Theatre Hall  
Date: May 9-11  
Time: 7pm



**CD Launch**  
Title: E jayostoyi Shakti Darje  
Discographer: Kazi M Arif  
Venue: Music and Dance auditorium, Shilpakala Academy  
Date: May 13



**Photography Exhibition**  
Title: Rabindra  
Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, Dharmundi  
Date: May 10-17  
Time: 12-5pm

# Tales of the Bard

## Rabindranath touches a chord ...

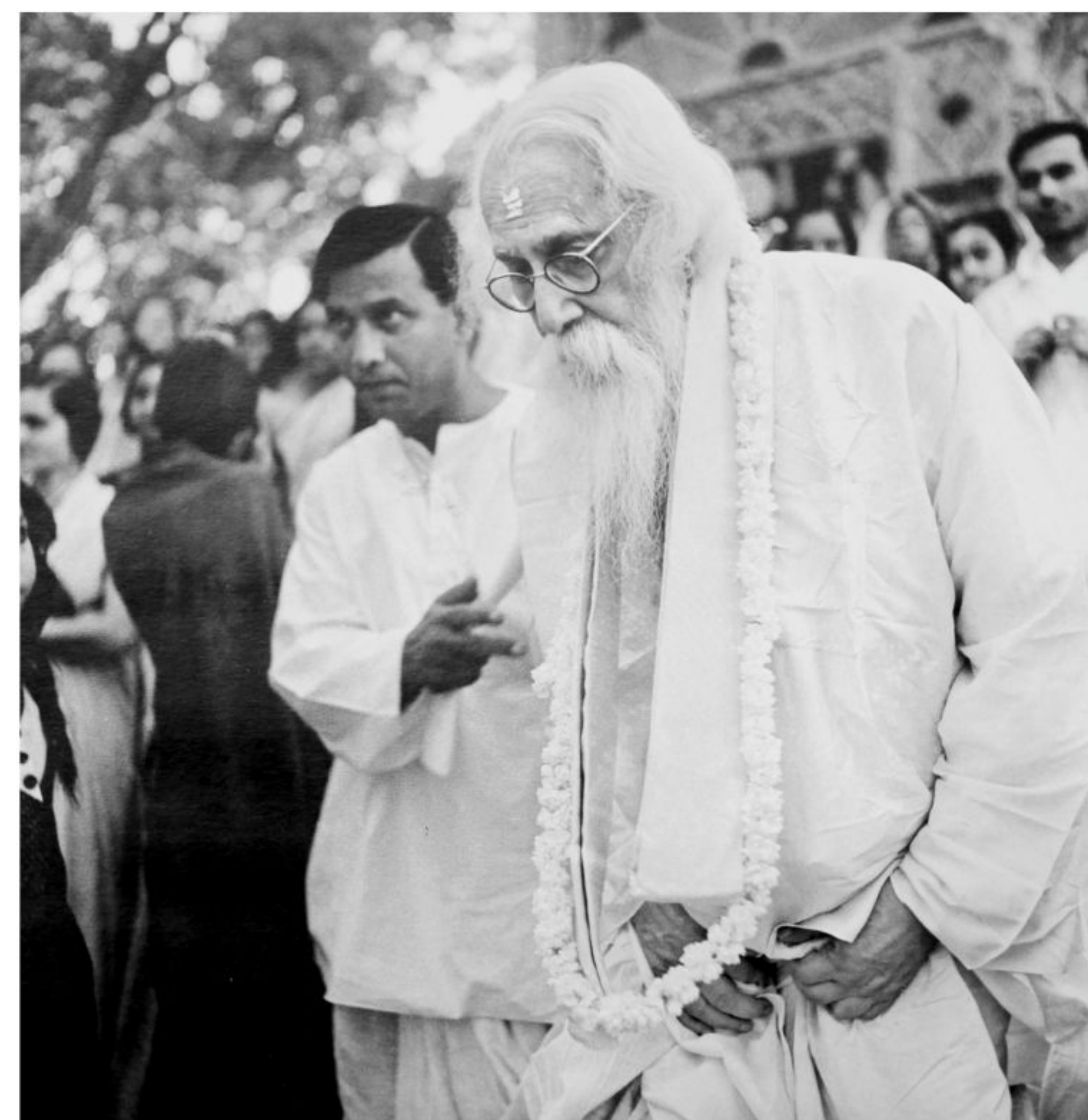
SYED BADRUL AHSAN

In Rabindranath is a perpetual reminder of Bengal. Yes, there is the cosmopolitan about him, the modernity that defines poetry in our times. What Neruda is to Latin America and Lorca is to Spain and Goethe is to German literature, Rabindranath is to the world that I endlessly rediscover, because the Bard is constantly reinventing it through his poetry. And poetry is in his songs. My day begins with his music, through drifting along in the melody that underpins our lives, Rabindranath's melody.

And life is but a purposeful definition of love, of romance. In the laughter of the woman who causes new poetic sensibilities to arise in my soul every time she waltzes into the room, in the silence which descends on her all day long, it is the song that matters. Through aami tomar shonge bedechhi amar praan, passion assumes wider dimensions and love is rekindled in the heart. I serenade this woman. I celebrate her, as I hum tomaye gaan shonabo / tai to amaye jagiye rakho.

Rabindranath touches a chord, somewhere and everywhere. He is a throbbing presence in my understanding of the roots I have sprung from, the roots that clutch, the roots that will call me back to earth. Those roots are the land, this country, which has through the centuries endured myriad degrees of pain and yet has refused to genuflect before fate or the terror periodically unleashed by unbridled nature. In the stillness of descending daylight, I watch the rising silhouettes of the huts and the palm trees in my village. The village is my country, larger and wider and of universal dimensions. The strains of O amar desher mati tomar porey thekai matha rise across the landscape, even as the early stars climb the heights to the heavens.

My Rabindranath is a soft call, almost in the manner of a whisper, to things mystical. Creation, along with the wonders that give it profundity of meaning, shines in the greyness enveloping the gently flowing river, in the waters that have flowed since time immemorial. I sing nodi pare ei



Rabindranath Tagore's birthday, 1937.

PHOTO COURTESY: SHAMBU SHAHA

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Asharhe. And I follow it up with aaji shaanjher Jamuna-e go / toruno chander kirona-e tori bheshe jaye go. When I reflect on Rabindranath, I appear to be getting drawn, yet again, into the wider philosophy of life he epitomizes through his songs. Indeed through the art and the aesthetics he pumped into Bengali literature through a life that spanned eight decades.

There is fullness in Rabindranath, a comprehensive life which borrowed from the universe around it and then reshaped and redefined what it had borrowed, before coming forth with it all as an offering to the cosmos we call home. He was a whole lot more than a poet, a maker of songs. He saw the world around him and then preserved it in the rainbow colours of his art.

In his work with wood, it was again primordial beauty more than the physicality of objects which emerged from the infinite creativity that was Rabindranath.

My Rabindranath speaks to me of the wonders of the wider world outside my window. He takes me to distant China, the distance being of the times gone by, a world that came encapsulated in the second decade of the twentieth century. I hear him expound on the nature of life and the character of death as he treks through Japan. In my Rabindranath is, curiously, a reminder of Yeats, for both men knew each other. Larger than that truth is the depths to which they were willing to go in creating new dreams and reviving old ones from the bed of time's gurgling, often riotous sea.

Rabindranath for me is a lesson on the need for patriotism, a guide on the limits to which nationalism can go in assessments of history. He speaks of the religion of man. Because he does, I find God in the church, in the temple, in the mosque. Because he does, God manifests Himself in the pouring rain, in the fall of a star, in the slow rise of the moon across a nocturnal sky, in the frantic struggle of the sun to peep through dense monsoon clouds. God is in the fragrance of the beautiful woman who holds my hand, whose face I caress, in the brevity of a moment. God lives in Rabindranath's soul. God reminds me of my place in the universe, as a leaf stirs on a listless afternoon. Ripples in the pond break into beautiful games, in the manner of so many children breaking into baby laughter.

My Rabindranath teaches me, every living day, the meaning of life lived in courage. Because of him, the mind is without fear, the head is forever unbowed.

"Khudhito Pashan" was written when Tagore visited his brother Satyendranath, posted in Ahmedabad as an officer in the Indian Civil

## The teller of the best tales

### Inspiration behind Tagore's shorts

FAHMIM FERDOUS

Poet, lyricist, bard, novelist, essayist, dramatist ... there was no territory of literature that Rabindranath Tagore did not leave his mark on. But of his works of prose, his richest contributions are probably in short stories; it has been said over the years that it was Tagore who shaped the literary genre in Bangla. The lyrical, rhythmic writing dealt with the simplest of themes and yet struck the strongest of chords -- be it in "Kabuliwala", "Chhuti" or "Samapti", he expressed the exuberance of childhood and heart-sinking tragedy with equal finesse. His collection of short stories, "Golpoquchho", also contains the back story of how he came upon some of his short stories. Here are a few:

Tagore wrote "Postmaster" while at his Shahzadpur Kacharibari (in Sirajganj), where there was a post office at the ground floor of it. Tagore befriended the postmaster and the two spent time together regularly. The protagonist of the story was inspired from his friend, as was the plot, from his experiences.

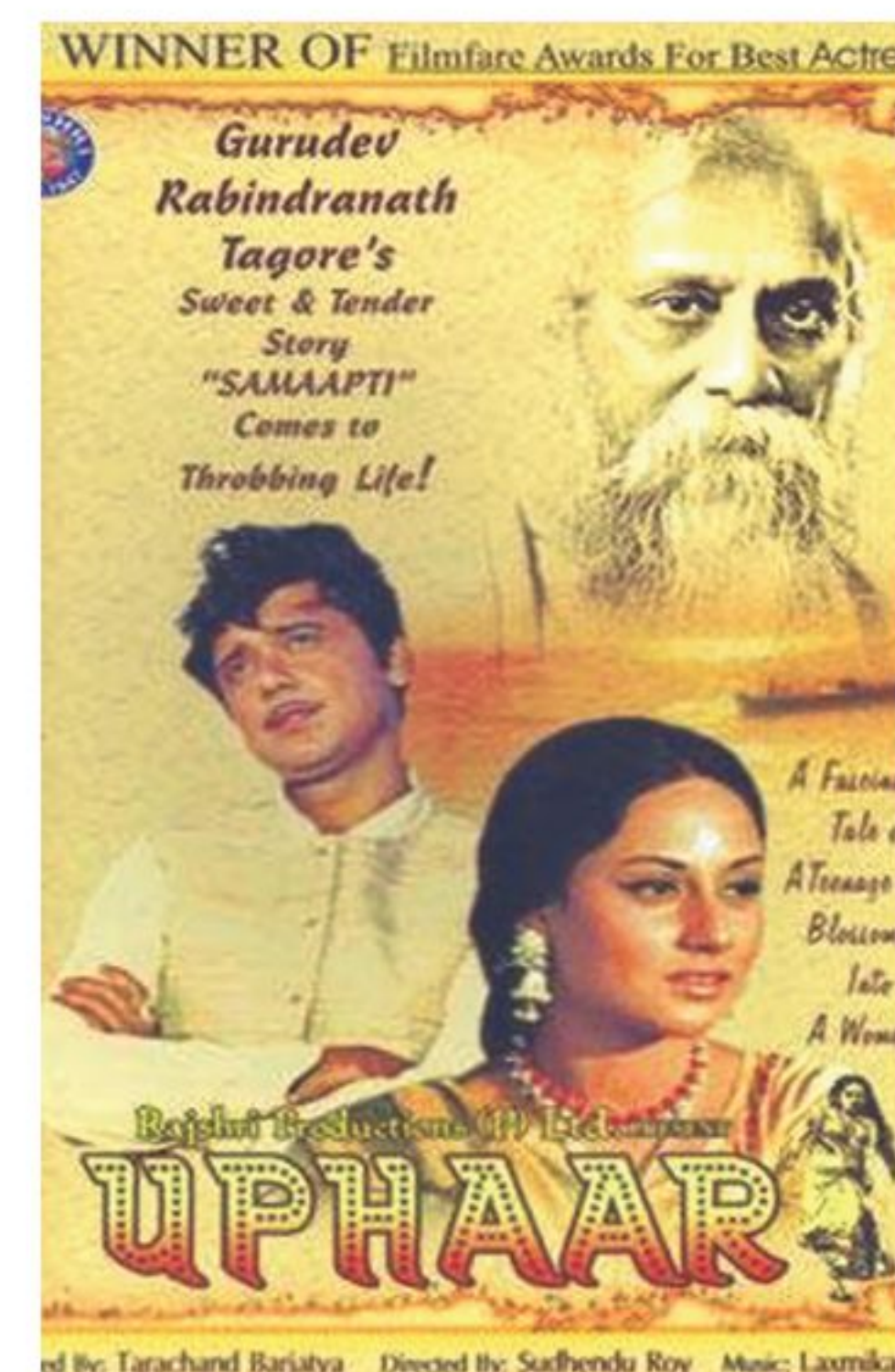
When Tagore was young, the room he slept in had a skeleton, that of a woman. However, it did not bother him as a child. But years later, when there were guests at his house, Tagore had to sleep in his old room, and was awakened deep into the night by an eerie feeling of a woman walking around his mosquito net. Despite being spooked out, he found a plot in the incident, and that is how "Kongkal" was written. Meanwhile, the story behind "Jibeto O Mrito" was also conceived late one night, when Tagore woke up in the middle of the night, and mistaking it to be just before dawn, went on his usual walk on the rooftop when the clock struck two. He felt as if he was haunting the house; that he was not alive, but only a spirit, and decided to pen it down. Another one of his horror stories, "Master Moshai", was made up on the spot, when he went to visit the queen of Cooch Behar, Suniti Devi, on an invitation, and the queen, convinced that Tagore had seen a ghost, insisted on his relating a haunting experience. The story was received so well by the audience that Tagore decided to write it down.

Another short story of his, "Durasha", was also written on that trip, when Suniti Devi proposed that a story be written in collaboration within a group, where each participant adds a line to the story. But after Tagore started -- with a woman crying by the Darjeeling Calcutta road, no one seemed to come up with the subsequent plot, and Tagore himself completed it.

"Khudhito Pashan" was written when Tagore visited his brother Satyendranath, posted in Ahmedabad as an officer in the Indian Civil

Service. His residence there was in Shahibag, in an old palace. When his brother would leave for work, Tagore would roam the halls, awestruck by the marvel of history that still stood there. The place-setting inspired him to write the story.

"Samapti" and "Chhuti", two of his classics, were also written at Shahzadpur. In front of his Kacharibari was a small dock where passenger boats would stop. One day, he noticed a young girl who would come to that 'ghaat' sometimes, with her hair cropped short and bright eyes that sparkled with intelligence. And then one day he saw the girl dressed as a bride, leaving on a boat.



The poster for film "Uphaar" (1971), based on Tagore's "Samapti", starring Jaya Bhaduri Bachchan.

The thought of such an exuberant, energetic soul having to settle into a different role saddened the bard, and the character of Mimmo was written. And then there was a young, mischievous boy that he noticed there, who jumped from one boat to another, and watched boatmen at work. Suddenly, he started rolling down tree logs kept on the river-bank. But a little girl came and sat on one of the logs, and after failing to get her off it, the boy pushed the log over along with the girl. The girl, in tears, retaliated with a slap to the boy's face, and that is how the character of Fotik was inspired.



## Tagore in Bollywood?

SADYA AFREEN MALICK

To a purist, the idea of using Tagore songs in a big budget Bollywood flick would set eyebrows arching skywards. What if Jaya and Amitabh Bachchan were to sing a Tagore song in duet? Or the glamorous Waheeda Rahman in her prime dancing to a tune composed by the bard?

But then again, Tagore has featured quite regularly on the silver screen, although almost hidden in obscurity. Only recently did noted composer Shantanu Moitra openly acknowledge that the hit song "Piya Bole", featured in the movie "Parineeta", was inspired by "Phoolle Phoolle Dhole Dhole", a very popular Tagore song. Similarly there have been many songs over the years that remind us of the Nobel Laureate's compositions, but have not always received the recognition.

A programme, titled "Adaptation of Tagore Melodies in Bollywood Music", was held at South Audley Street, Nehru Centre, London, not long ago. It was conceived, researched and compiled by Anuradha Roma Choudhury and organised by the cultural wing of the Indian High Commission in London.

The programme explored the adaptation of Tagore songs by musical maestros of Indian cinema over the years, with live demonstrations of both the original compositions and their corresponding

Bollywood versions. While Anuradha R Choudhury presented the Tagore songs, her student, Dia Chakravarty, performed samples of the Hindi hits to a full-house.

The show highlighted many of the instances where Tagore songs featured prominently in the Hindi movies. "Mera Sundar Sapna Beet Gaya", a song with a kirtan flavour adapted from "Rodonobhora E Boshonto", was a smashing hit and breakthrough performance for Geeta Roy (later Dutt) in the '30s. There were other songs but it was "Mera Sundar Sapna..." that left all songs behind and far too.

"Naina Deewane", by singer Suraiya in the film "Alaam", is an improvisation of the song "Shedin Dujone Dulechhinu Bon-e". Likewise "Rahi Matwale", a duet by Suraiya and Talat Mahmood in the film "Waris" in 1954, is an adaptation of the Tagore song "Ore Grihobashi". The superhit number "Bachpan Ke Din Bhula Na Dena", in the film "Deedar" directed by Naushad, is an improvisation of the song "Churi Hoya Gekhhey Raj Koshey" from Tagore's dance-drama "Shyama". It also has similarity with the tunes of "Keno Pantho E Choncholota".

SD Burman, the illustrious music director, was also known for adapting the tunes of Tagore songs. "Abhiman" (the soundtrack of which was directed by Burman) features Amitabh and Jaya Bachchan lip-synching the phenomenal

"Tere Mere Milan Ke Ye Raina". The tune is an adaptation of Tagore's popular song "Jodi Taare Nai Chini Go". The Talat Mahmood hit, "Jalte Hain Jiske Liye" (in 1959) was inspired by Tagore's "Ekoda Tumi Priye".

The list could go on. Dia and her mentor Anuradha presented 17 Tagore songs.

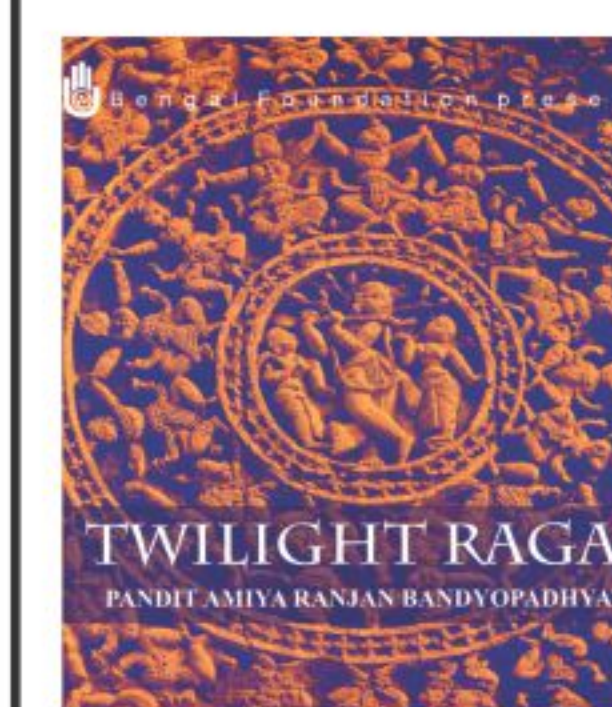
Considering Tagore's treasure trove of songs, it's no surprise that several music composers such as Pankaj Mullick, K Mullick, Rai Chand Boral, RD Burman, Hemant Kumar (Mukhopadhyay), Bappi Lahiri and others were inspired by his compositions. The trend of adaptation, imitation or improvisation of Tagore's melodies has its roots in 1930s Bollywood. However, in most cases it was left unacknowledged. The reason behind could be that until the Visva Bharati's copyright to all of Tagore's songs expired, it was mandatory in India for any music director/singer to obtain permission of the Music Board before releasing a record with songs composed by him. All this was possibly to avoid violation of the copyright act.

The programme was an eye opener and the Nehru Centre in London received kudos for arranging it. The audience was treated to an evening full of melodies and left the venue deep in thought: what other popular Hindi songs could be traced back to Tagore?

## IT'S TRUE!

In March 2004, the Nobel medal that had been awarded to Rabindranath Tagore, along with other valuables and citations, were stolen from a museum in the Uttaran complex in Santiniketan. On Tagore's 100th birth anniversary, the Nobel Foundation issued a new Nobel medal to Tagore.

## NEW RELEASES



**Twilight Ragas**  
Artist: Pandit Amiya Ranjan Bandyopadhyay  
Source: Bengal Foundation



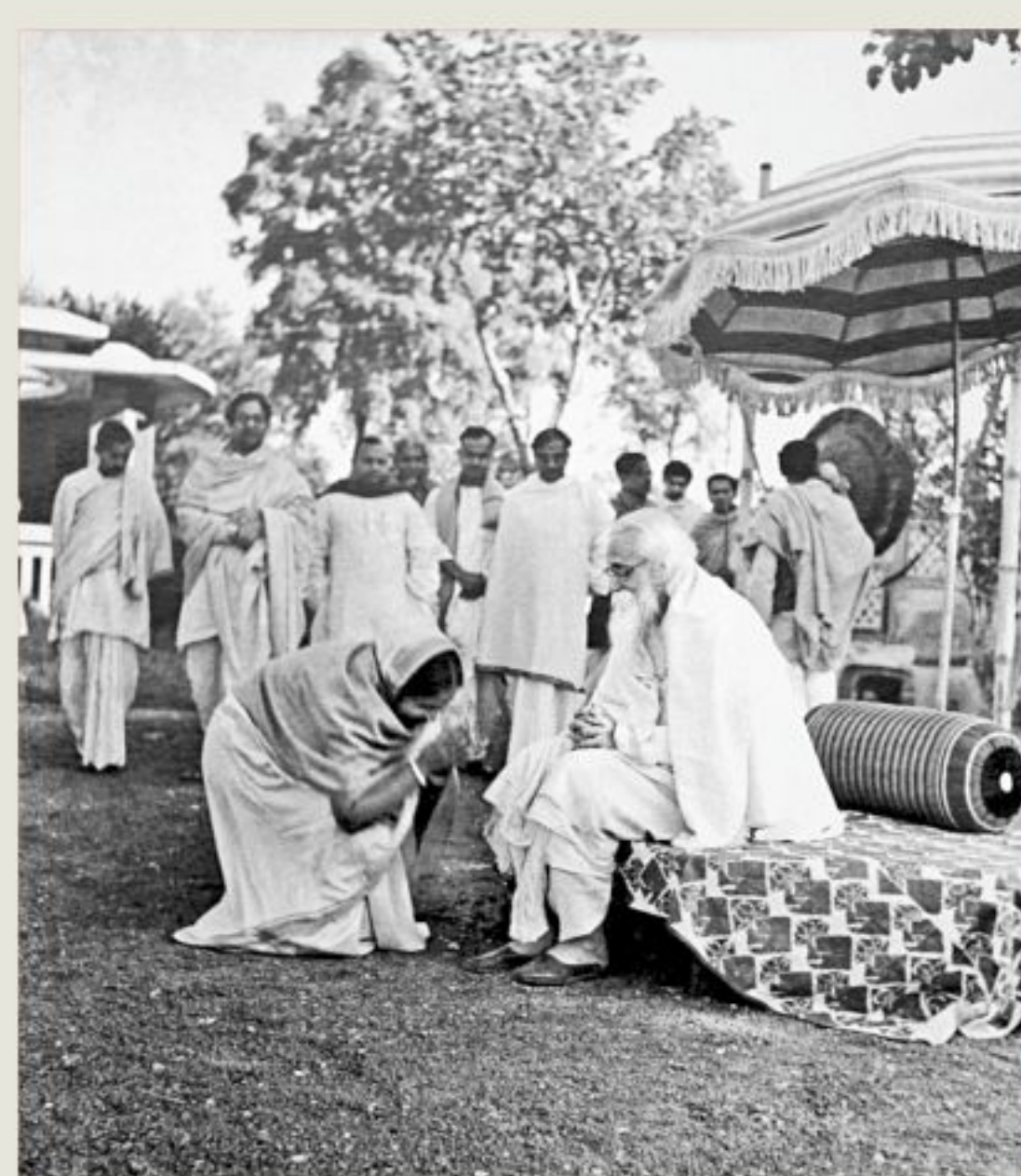
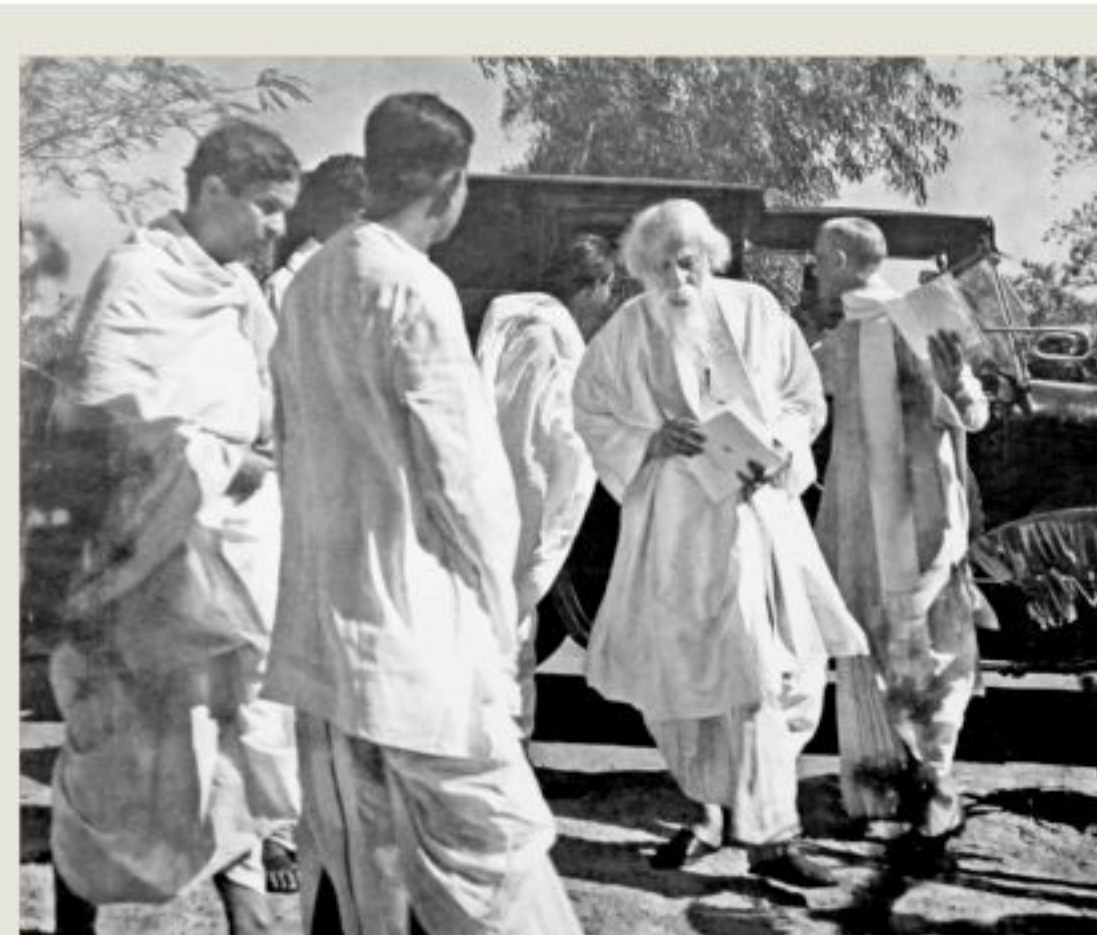
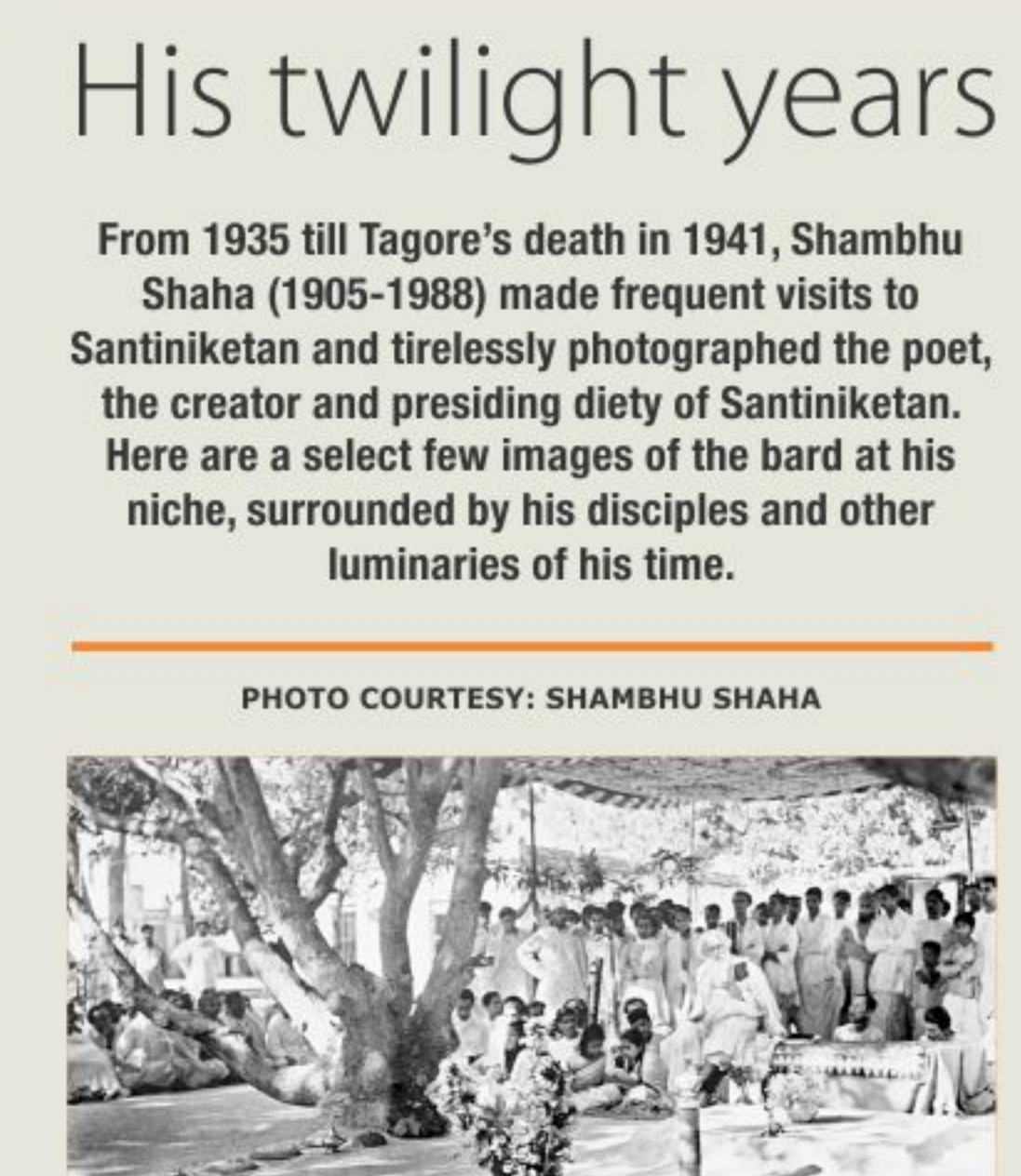
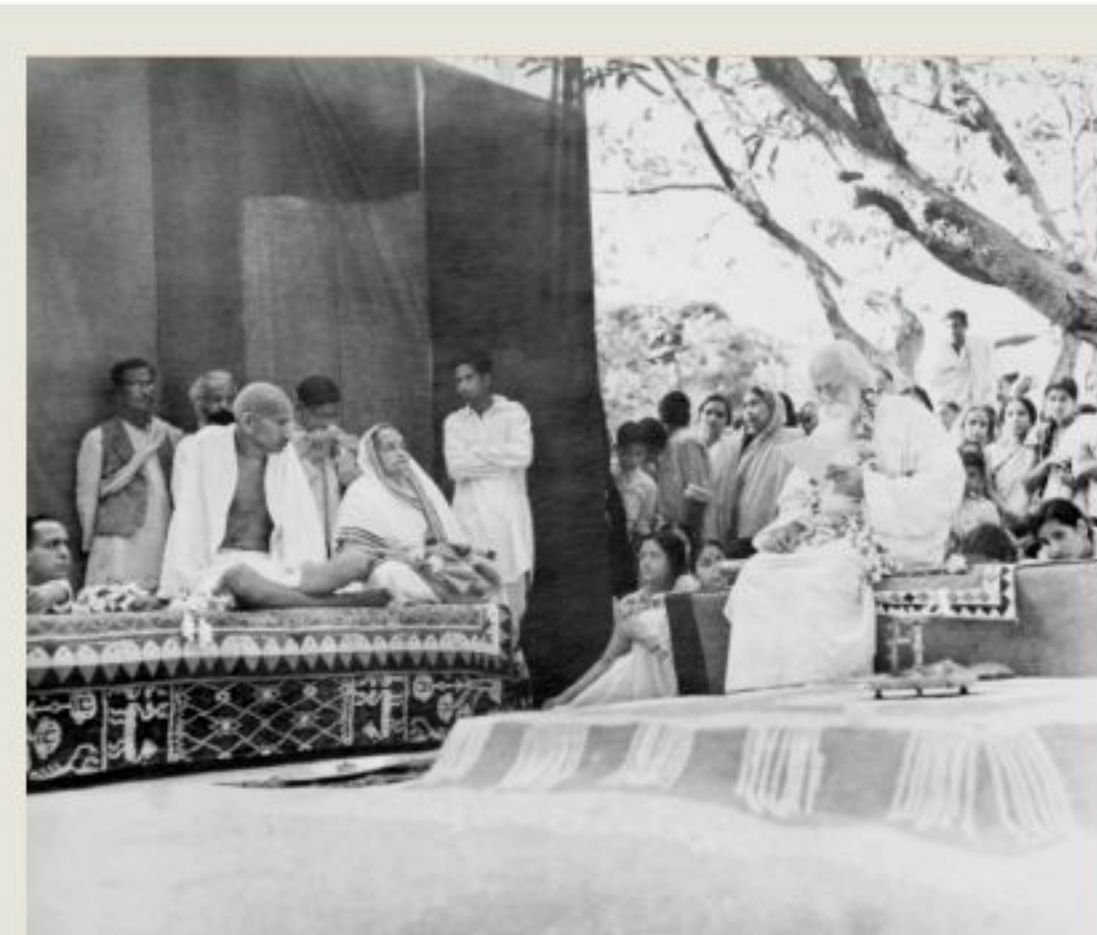
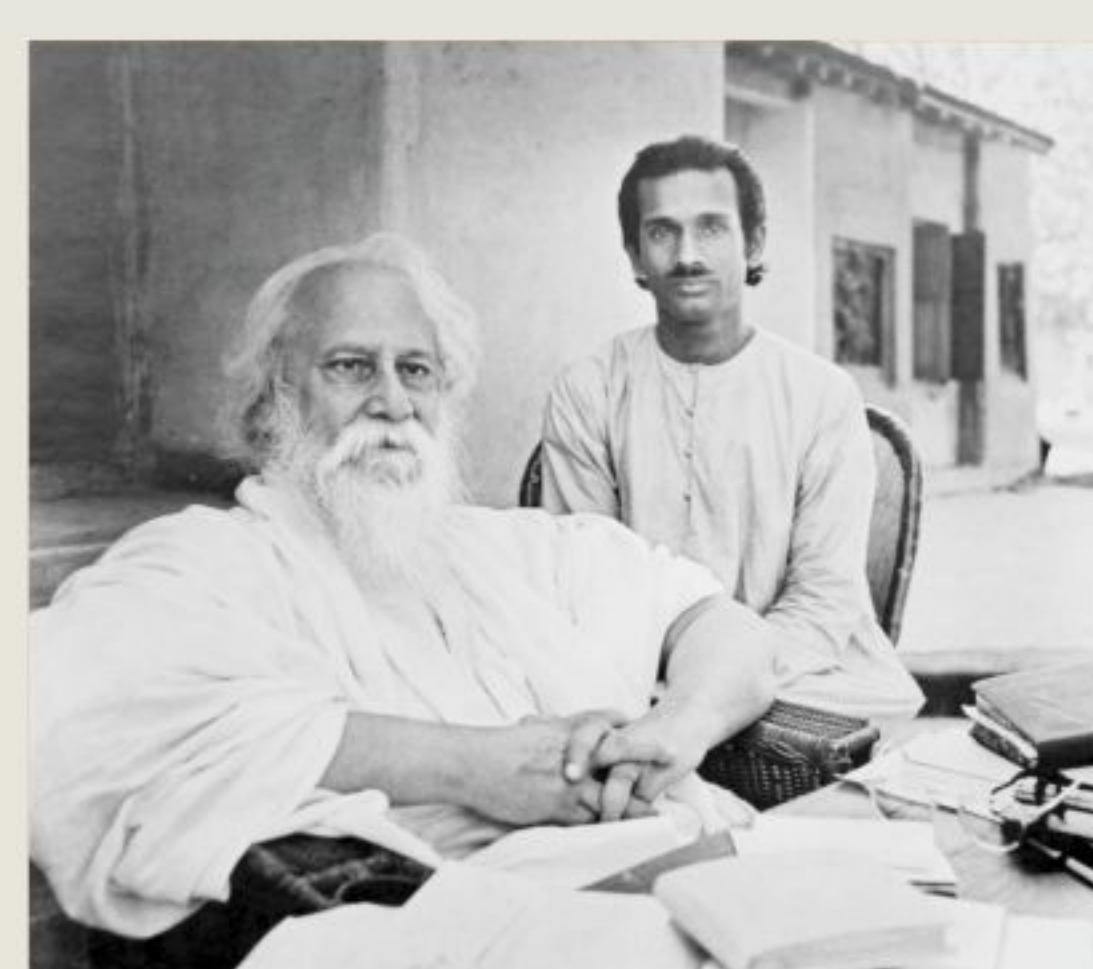
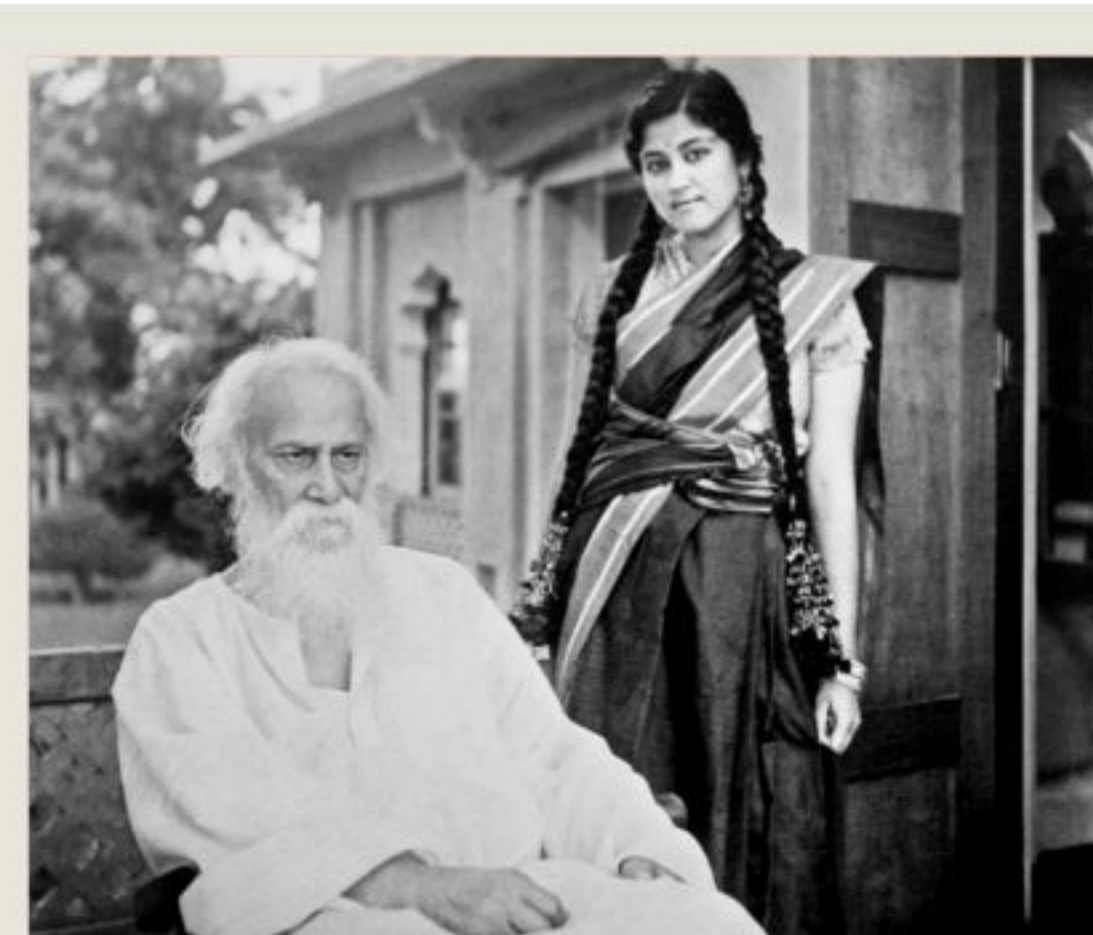
**Gaane Gaane Tumi Mixed Album**  
Source: Laser Vision



**Chhanda-bandhane**  
Artist: Nandita Yasmin  
Source: Bengal Foundation



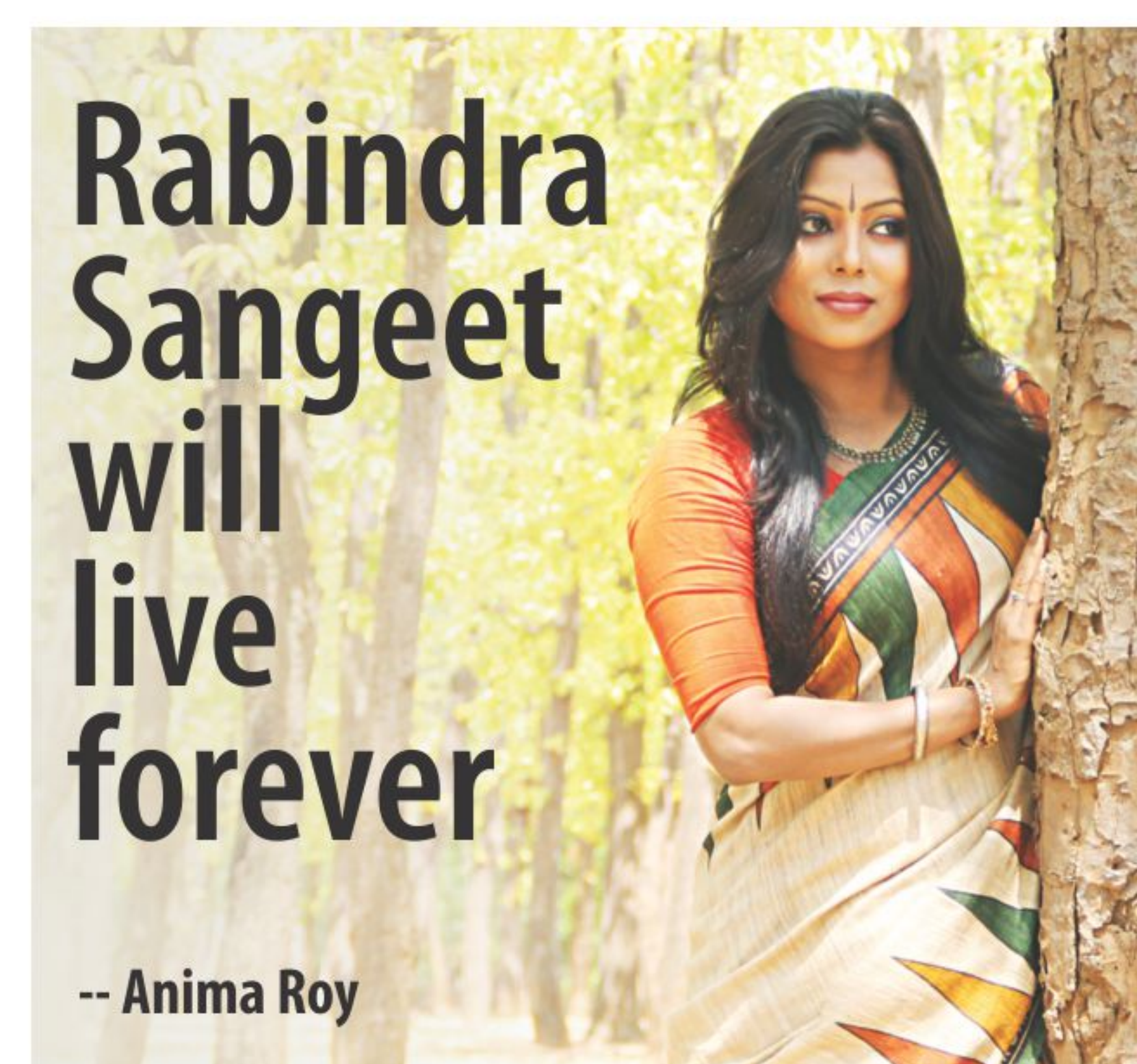
**Tori Elo**  
Artist: Ehsan Rahi and Belal Haha  
Source: Laser Vision



## His twilight years

From 1935 till Tagore's death in 1941, Shambhu Shaha (1905-1988) made frequent visits to Santiniketan and tirelessly photographed the poet, the creator and presiding diety of Santiniketan. Here are a select few images of the bard at his niche, surrounded by his disciples and other luminaries of his time.

PHOTO COURTESY: SHAMBU SHAHA



-- Anima Roy

SHAH ALAM SHAZI

Anima Roy, a professor in the Music and Drama Department of Jagannath University, is also a principal of a music school. Not just that, the Tagore singer has long been in the music industry with her melodious voice. She recently released her solo album on the occasion of Rabindra Jayanti celebrations.

In a recent conversation, The Daily Star talked to Anima about the album. Tell us about your latest project.

Anima: "Robir Alo" is my fifth solo album. Prothush Bandyopadhyay of Kolkata is the music composer of the album, that was released under the banner of Impress Audio Vision.

Which Tagore songs have you chosen for your album?

Anima: The main elements of Rabindra Sangeet -- love, nature and worship -- are rendered here. I tried to sing the songs from the depths of my heart. I hope music lovers will receive the album warmly.

Tell us about your tutelage?

Anima: I learned music primarily from Debashish Chakrabarty, Sadhon Chandra Barman and Surbani Lalitakala Academy. Later, I trained under Waheedul Haque, Sanjida Khatun and Mita Haque. Finally, I completed a Rabindra Sangeet course from Chhayanaut.

You have also taught music?

Anima: I taught at Mastermind and Sunnysdale schools. Besides, I was a part-time teacher at the Drama Department of Dhaka University. I also run a music school named Surbarah.

How will you celebrate the 25th of Boishakh this year?

Anima: As it is Rabindra Jayanti, I will spend the entire day immersed in music. I will also perform in live programmes on a few TV channels.

What is your philosophy of music?

Anima: One can never sing to plan, as it is a God-gifted art. I want to sing quality songs. As I am a dedicated Tagore singer, I believe Rabindra Sangeet will live forever.

## Rabindra festival begins in Shahzadpur

Gawher Rizvi assures of Rabindra University soon

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPRU, back from Shahzadpur

Prime minister's international affairs advisor Dr. Gawher Rizvi stated that the government is determined to set up a Rabindra University in Shahzadpur. The primary work of the university will begin soon. He made the remarks while addressing the inaugural session of the three-day Rabindra festival being held at the Shahzadpur Kacharibari on Thursday, marking the 153rd birth anniversary of the noble laureate.

The festival is being organised by Sirajganj District administration. Gawher Rizvi inaugurated the festival while Sirajganj deputy commissioner Md. Billal Hossain chaired the programme.

Students from different countries would come to study here in Rabindra University if we ensure international standard," Rizvi said, adding that such an initiative can take time to bear results.

The inaugural programme was addressed, among others, by lawmaker of Sirajganj-6 Hasibur Rahman Shohan, lawmaker of Sirajganj-5 Ishaque Hosain Talukder and former VC of Rajshahi University Dr. Abdul Khaleque.

The speakers focused on the life and works of the bard. Tagore himself fell in love with the nature of Shahzadpur. Many of his literary works based on nature and casual rural life were inspired by his experiences here, the speakers said.

Later, artistes of Shilpakala Academy Ulahpara (Sirajganj) and artistes of Shahzadpur upazila performed music and dance, marking the opening of the festival.

## Quiz Contest The Amazing Spider-Man 2

Test your knowledge to win FREE Premium Tickets to The Amazing Spider-Man 2 with

The Daily Star Cinemaplex Spider-Man Quiz.

10 winners everyday! 2 Premium tickets for each winner

To participate for your chance to win TWO FREE PREMIUM TICKETS, email your answers to [marvels.spiderman@gmail.com](mailto:marvels.spiderman@gmail.com) by 4.00pm today with your name, DOB, mobile number and address. The winners of the quiz will be announced tomorrow in the newspaper and through email.

Quiz No-07

1. Who played the Electro Role in Amazing Spiderman 2 Movie?
2. Who played the Green Goblin Role in Amazing Spiderman 2 Movie?
3. What is the color of Spiderman's Costume?

\*A Joint initiative of The Daily Star and Marvel

Answers of QUIZ 06:

1. Monomy Maahide, Uttara
2. Kaniz Marzia, Dhaka University
3. Nandita Sarkar, DAC Hostel
4. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, Dharmundi
5. Tanisha Preity, Dhaka University

Winners of QUIZ 06:

6. Niaz Marshed, Dhaka University
7. Wasimul Akram, Middle Badda
8. Perdurash Sarkar, DAC Hostel
9. Protik Kumar Sarker, Gulshan 1
10. Tasnuva Tanjin Rushda, Mohammadpur